



TOTH
MONTESSORI
NAVY YARD, WASHINGTON, DC



Family Handbook

Revised June 2022

ToTH Montessori

1000 5th St SE
Washington, DC 20003

Phone: (202) 748-5930

Email: info@toddlersonthehill.org

www.tothmontessori.org

Purpose of This Handbook

This handbook provides an overview for the ToTH community—parents, caregivers, teachers, and staff—regarding policies, philosophies, and procedures. It is meant to be read in its entirety. Please bring any questions and concerns about this handbook to our Head of School. We are happy to discuss our policies and to include parents as partners in the process of building a better school community.

Who We Are

ToTH Montessori is a private Montessori child development center licensed by the District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). Our Toddler and Primary programs engage children aged 18 months to 6 years old in a learning environment guided by teaching teams that always include a trained Montessorian with a teaching certification endorsed by MACTE (Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education), or one who is seeking that credential. We are a member school of the International Montessori Council (IMC), and operate according to IMC standards.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide an early learning experience that fosters independence, curiosity, self-motivation and a life-long love of learning through the full implementation of Montessori pedagogy and philosophy. We value equity, diversity and partnership and strive to nurture the development and growth of the children, staff, parents, and caregivers in our community.

What We Believe

We believe that children are capable and worthy of deep respect. We believe that during this important developmental time, it is imperative that children are given a peaceful environment in which to explore their curiosities with self-correcting, multi-sensory materials through self-directed learning. We believe in uninterrupted work and play. We believe children learn best when the school environment is a collaboration between teachers, children, and parents, working together as a supportive and cohesive community. We believe that children deserve time and space to develop according to their nature.

Program Descriptions

Full and Part Day Toddler

Our full and part day toddler programs support children ages 18 months to 3 years old in becoming independent and capable members of a community while allowing them to freely experience the joys of discovery, exploration, and movement. The environment is prepared by trained Montessori guides in a manner that encourages freedom of movement, independence, exploration, concentration, and joy. A Montessori toddler classroom meets the needs of each individual child and is a place of beauty with items such as real plants, flowers, and artwork for the children to experience with all of their senses.

At the Toddler level, Montessori curriculum is focused on helping children develop core skills through engaging in practical activities and working with materials and activities that interest them:

- Care of self: toilet learning, hand washing, dressing, eating, napping
- Care of environment: cleaning, putting away materials, dishwashing, food preparation
- Language: vocabulary development, verbalizing needs and wants, describing images, having conversations, singing
- Fine motor skills: developing hand muscles through picking up and transferring objects, working with tools and utensils, making art works
- Gross motor skills: climbing, balancing, rocking, spinning, running, walking carefully in a line, doing art at an easel
- Socialization: Talking to adults and other children, participating in group circle times and games, learning names, learning manners, practicing empathy and care for others

Primary

Our Primary program is a five day a week program for children ages 3 to 6 years. Primary is designed as a three year program culminating in the kindergarten year. The Montessori Primary classroom is a specially prepared environment where children are given sequenced one on one and group lessons in the traditional Montessori curriculum areas: grace and courtesy, practical life, sensorial development, language, mathematics and the cosmic curriculum (which includes geography, culture, botany, and zoology,) plus art and Spanish instruction. Once the materials have been presented, children are free to choose work independently during the daily three hour work cycle. The environment is designed to be peaceful, organized, and full of beautiful materials and items such as real plants, flowers, and art for the children to experience with all of their senses.

In the Primary classroom children work on foundational skills in reading, writing, mathematics, problem solving, and emotional regulation. The teachers carefully observe the interests, skills, and needs of each child and guide the children along individualized learning paths. After three years in Primary our students are confident learners who have experienced joy through being able to freely explore and make choices at school. They know how to be responsible and caring members of a diverse community and are primed for their next developmental phase.

School Administrative Staff

Head of School

Stephanie Sarvana

stephanie@toddlersonthehill.org

Head of Administration

Anya Landau-French

anya@toddlersonthehill.org

Director of Admissions and Enrollment

Ila Furman

ila@toddlersonthehill.org

Faculty & Teaching Staff

Primary Classroom

Classroom Phone: (202) 999-8062

Sasha Sargent, Lead Guide (Early Childhood (3-6), CGMS); sasha@toddlersonthehill.org

Elizabeth Thompson, Teacher (Early Childhood (3-6) AMS guide certification in progress, WSMS-TEP);

elizabeth@toddlersonthehill.org

Gladys Mariscal, Teacher/Spanish; gladys@toddlersonthehill.org

Renata Faccioli, Guide, Instructional Coach, and Family Education Coordinator (Early Childhood (3-6)

Certified, CGMS); renata@toddlersonthehill.org

Part Day Toddler Classroom

Classroom Phone: (202) 836-3365

Javacia Finney, Lead Guide (Early Childhood (3-6), AMI Certified, Washington Montessori Institute;

Infant/Toddler Certified, GGMS); javacia@toddlersonthehill.org

Naya Webb, Assistant Teacher; naya@toddlersonthehill.org

Cecilia de Barros Dantas, Assistant Teacher; cecilia@toddlersonthehill.org

Full Day Toddler Classroom

Classroom Phone: (202) 281-0435

Zharray Johnson, Co-lead Guide (Infant/Toddler (0-3), CGMS); zharray@toddlersonthehill.org

Karen Solache, Co-lead Teacher (Infant/Toddler certification in progress, CGMS);

karen@toddlersonthehill.org

Laura Tucker, Assistant Teacher; laura@toddlersonthehill.org

Parents can find bios and pictures of our teaching and administrative staff on our [website](#).

Board

ToTH's Board provides general oversight of the school and its finances, and conducts strategic planning, visioning, supervision of the heads of school and administration. The Board includes ToTH's owners and original founders Sara Agarwal, Joy Wilder, and Anya Landau French, as well as the head of school, Stephanie Sarvana. The Board will review its policies each year and make any necessary changes accordingly. You can reach the board by contacting Anya Landau French, the board liaison, at anya@toddlersonthehill.org.

General Information & Policies

Location & Contact Information

ToTH Montessori is located inside of the Arthur Capper Recreation Center at 1000 5th Street SE, Washington, D.C. 20003. ToTH has a private entrance located at the north end of the building. At this time, due to the public health emergency, guests are not permitted to enter the building.

Office phone: (202) 748-5930

Email: info@toddlersonthehill.org

School Hours of Operation

8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Dates of operation

ToTH Montessori offers an 11 month school year with a four-week summer break in August. You may view [our full calendar](#) here.

Adult to child ratios and class sizes

Our Primary classroom has a licensed capacity of up to 28 children, with 2-3 teachers. We typically enroll between 22 and 28 children, depending on the ages and readiness of the children. (We often hold spaces open for older toddlers who become ready to move up mid-year.)

Our Full Day Toddler classroom has a licensed capacity of up to 16 children, with 2-3 teachers. We typically enroll between 12 and 16 children, depending on the ages and readiness of the children.

Our Part Day Toddler classroom has a licensed capacity of up to 12 children, with 2-3 teachers. We typically enroll 10-12 children.

	Arrival	Dismissal
Primary Classroom	8:30 to 9:30 a.m.	5 to 5:30 p.m. Early pick-up: 3:30 p.m.
Full Day Toddler Classroom	8:30 to 8:45 a.m.	3:30 to 5:30 p.m.
Part Day Toddler (Morning)	9:15 a.m.	12:15 p.m.
Part Day Toddler (Afternoon)	2:30 p.m.	5:30 p.m.

Daily Schedule

At ToTH our daily classroom schedules are seasonal and may shift on a given day depending on the weather, special events, or the needs of the children.

Sample Primary Schedule

- Arrival to Classroom or Playground
- Work Cycle (w/ snack available)
- Group Gathering
- Lunch
- Outdoor Play
- Rest/Kindergartner Work Time
- Early Dismissal
- Afternoon Work Cycle or Neighborhood Outing (w/ snack available)
- Group Gathering
- Dismissal

Sample Full Day Toddler Schedule

- Arrival to Classroom
- Work Cycle and Morning Snack
- Circle Time
- Playground Time/Neighborhood Walk
- Lunch
- Nap
- Afternoon Work and Outdoor Play
- Snack and Circle
- Dismissal

Sample Part Day Toddler Schedule

- Arrival
- Work Cycle
- Circle Time
- Snack
- Outdoor Play
- Dismissal

Attendance Policies

Unlike “drop-in” style child care centers, ToTH’s programs all require families to consistently adhere to set classroom schedules and attendance policies. Regular attendance is critical to your child’s success at school. Children in the first developmental plane thrive off of consistency and routine and our teachers take great care to provide that in our daily schedules. Parents must notify the school in advance if their child will be late or absent (please see below). Excessive unexcused absences, tardiness, or late pick-ups may be grounds for dismissal.

Additional attendance policies for families participating in the DC child care subsidy program can be found in the child care subsidy agreement paperwork.

Daily Sign-In

1. All children must be “signed-in” daily before or at arrival using the online [Kiosk](#), which is connected to your Curacubby account. QR codes to connect to the Kiosk are posted at ToTH entrances and can be found on the daily materials info sheets.
2. Parents can sign in to the Kiosk by entering the last four digits of their cell phone number and a personal PIN. Parents are responsible for setting their Kiosk PIN in their Curacubby profile.

Drop-off Locations

1. **Primary and Part Day Toddler** children should be dropped off at the main ToTH entrance on 5th St. Drop off/pick up may occur at the playground gate on certain days. A teacher will greet your child each morning at the door and welcome them into school.
2. **Full Day Toddler** children should be dropped off at the classroom entrance located on the K Street side of the building. A teacher will greet your child each morning at the door and welcome them into school.

Drop Off Procedures & Best Practices for the Montessori Adult

- Please have your child walk up to the door while holding your hand (avoid carrying your child unless they need that support on a given day). It is important for your child to practice walking into school independently.
- The parent or caregiver must supervise the child outside of ToTH up until the child enters the building. If your child is walking into school independently, you may stand several feet back while they walk in, but please make visual and verbal contact (wave/greeting) with the teacher before walking away.
- Children wearing diapers should arrive in an unsoiled diaper. A diaper changing station is available inside of the recreation center’s main entrance.
- Please have **all** of the child’s items zipped into their backpack and have your child wear or carry their backpack.
- If it is cold, please drop off your child wearing all outerwear (coat, mittens, hat) or make sure that all necessary items are stored in the backpack.
- For a successful drop off, we encourage parents to model confidence and optimism for your child with a greeting to the staff member receiving your child and then a brief goodbye: “Goodbye! Have a great day at school. I will see you at pick up time!”
- If your child protests, cries, or generally has difficulty with your departure, this is normal, and it is ok! Tell your child that you are going to let the teacher help them get to the classroom, safely hand your child over to the teacher or staff member, wave goodbye, and walk away with confidence.
- Try not to linger or show worry as that will show your child that you do not feel comfortable leaving them at school. The teachers will send you a quick note or photo later in the morning to assure you that your child is ok.
- If you would like to stay and chat with other parents at drop off, we kindly ask that you move away from the classroom doors or playground so that your child can transition fully to the school environment.

- So that the teachers can place their full attention on the children, they cannot have conversations with parents during drop-off. If you feel that there is important information that your child's teacher should know at the beginning of the day, please send a text message to the class phone.

Late Arrivals

1. We believe that optimal learning occurs when disruptions to the classroom routine are limited so that we can protect the children's concentration and sense of order. In order to protect the uninterrupted work cycle and minimize disruptions, late arrivals after the posted arrival times are not permitted, except in the following instances: essential medical and dental appointments, special family occasions, unexpected emergencies, school interviews, or other essential appointments.
2. **Primary and Full Day Toddler:** Late arrivals are only permitted for the above reasons up until 12 p.m. *If your child will not arrive at school before 12 p.m., you should arrange to have them stay home that day.*
3. If you know that your child will be arriving after the posted arrival time due to an upcoming appointment or event, **please notify your teachers at least 24 hours in advance** by sending a text message to the classroom phone. Please confirm with the teachers that your child's class will be on campus when you plan to arrive, as some classes will take neighborhood walks.
4. We understand that occasionally circumstances arise that delay your child's arrival. If you are running late due to traffic, a difficult morning, etc., please text the classroom phone so that the teachers are aware and can prepare for the late arrival.

Daily Pick-Up Procedures

1. **Primary:** Parents may choose between two daily dismissal times: Early dismissal at 3:30 p.m. or end-of-day dismissal any time between 5:00 and 5:30 p.m. Parents should send a text message to the classroom phone 10-15 minutes prior to their arrival. Children will be escorted from the classroom to the entrance by a teacher. Depending on the season, dismissal may occur from the playground.
2. **Full Day Toddler:** Parents should send a text message to the classroom phone 10-15 minutes prior to their arrival. Parents may come to the classroom entrance on the K Street side of the building and knock on the classroom door. Depending on the season, dismissal may occur from the playground.
3. **Part Day Toddler:** Parents may gather outside the main entrance and children will be escorted out one at a time by the teacher.
4. **If children are picked up later than the posted dismissal time, late fees will be applied to your Curacubby account according to the fee schedule below. All late fees collected are paid directly to the teachers who must stay late to provide supervision.**
5. **If parents or caregivers choose to remain onsite following pick-up, we ask you to closely supervise your child, with both parent or caregiver and child remaining, as well as any younger siblings, inside of the fenced playground.**

Only a custodial parent(s) or authorized individuals may pick up a child. If someone unfamiliar to your child's teacher is picking up your child and you have already listed that person as an authorized pick-up on your enrollment forms, please make sure they **bring a photo ID with them to pick up and show it to the teacher.** If you are sending someone who is not listed as an authorized pick up, you must notify your child's teacher ahead of time in writing and make sure the person brings a photo

ID to match with the name and description given to the teacher. If you would like to permanently add to or change your list of authorized pick up persons, you may do so by editing your child's Curacubby profile, or you may reach out to Ila Furman.

***A note about pick up*

Although convenient, pick up is not the best time to have conversations with your child's teacher as they are usually quite busy with dismissal procedures and supervision of the remaining children, and it is generally best not to discuss the child's experience at school in their presence. If you have any questions for your child's teacher, please request a phone call or video chat via email.

Late Pick-up Policy

It is critical that children are picked up on time so that our teachers can leave on time and our cleaners can come in and safely begin their work. If a child is picked after posted classroom program hours, late pick-up fees will be assessed.

- We ask that the parent or caregiver who is picking up the child text the classroom phone if they are running late and notify the teacher of their ETA.
- If no caregiver has arrived at pick-up time and we have not received a text or phone call with an ETA, the teachers will call both parents and any emergency contacts until someone can be reached.
- If no parent or emergency contact can be reached within 15 minutes, staff will alert DC Metropolitan Police.

Invoices for late pick up fees will be sent via Curacubby. Any late fees not paid in full within 21 days will result in a temporary suspension from school until the invoice is paid. Any abuse of this system or perpetual tardiness at pick up may result in expulsion from the program.

Late Pick-up Fees

1-10 minutes late: \$10

11-15 minutes late: \$20

16-30 minutes late: \$40

>30 minutes late: \$80

Other Caregivers

It is the parents responsibility to direct other caregivers in their household to follow our policies and practices. The bridge between home and school is important and we want to partner with all adults in a child's household(s). If your child has other caregivers in addition to their parents who are involved in getting the child ready for school or dropping off/picking up, it is necessary that those caregivers be on our email distribution lists and have their cell phone number on the classroom contact list so they can get updates about school. **It's important that your caregiver read this handbook and be aware of all of our policies and procedures.** Please make an introduction over text or email, and support the caregiver's ability to set your child up for a successful time at school.

Inclement weather and other unscheduled closings

ToTH will make decisions about inclement weather closures and delays based on the safety of our teaching staff and families. Messages about delays, closings, or emergencies, including inclement weather notices, are sent via SMS text and email using Curacubby. Please make sure that your cell

phone number is up-to-date in your profile and make sure that you “opt-in” to receive notifications from the school. *ToTH does not offer make up days for inclement weather, emergency closures, or illnesses.*

Community Guidelines and Expectations

Family Involvement

A successful family and school partnership requires that parents and caregivers:

- Be attentive to classroom announcements and requests
- Regularly attend parent-teacher conferences and classroom observations
- Read weekly class reports and view photo albums
- Respond to inquiries from teachers and administrators in a timely manner
- Be honest and open to dialogue concerning your child’s development and experience
- Be open to receiving guidance that is child-centered and resources that are aligned with the Montessori philosophy
- Take advantage of opportunities for further involvement if you have the time and capacity!

Options include:

- Become a classroom parent (coordinate teacher birthday/holiday gifts, Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week, classroom social gatherings)
- Share a talent/experience/profession with our Primary classroom at Group Gathering
- Organize a community service project
- Host a community gathering
- Sponsor a special event/experience for the children (musician/performance) or parents (guest speaker, wine tasting, fun run, etc.)

Standards for Behavior

As members of the ToTH Montessori community, parents and caregivers of enrolled children agree to treat ToTH staff, teachers, children, and each other with dignity, grace, courtesy, and respect in all interactions, whether they be in-person, virtual, written, or verbal.

Addressing Concerns

Should you have a specific concern about your child or a general concern, please reach out to the appropriate person to schedule a private, in-person or virtual meeting. Staff must refrain from discussing ToTH’s students or school issues when they are in the presence of the children (at pick-up/drop-off, on virtual call at home, during a parent-teacher conference, etc.) or while in the company of ToTH parents outside of school hours. We invite you to request a call or meeting so that we may speak freely and give you our undivided attention when we speak with you about your family’s experience at ToTH.

Being a Good Neighbor

ToTH is proud to be located at the Arthur Capper Recreation Center and we strive to be kind, respectful, and attentive members of the community. The immediate neighborhood contains residential homes, an elementary school, and public housing for seniors. Please drive safely and be attentive to all stop signs, crossing guards, crosswalks, and parking restrictions.

Parking

We ask parents, caregivers and visitors to use only safe and legal parking strategies for pick up and drop off. Parents must not block any part of the crosswalks or park cars--even momentarily--in the intersection. It is critical to remember that our location is not only a high traffic area for cars and children (from ToTH and from Van Ness Elementary), but also for residents of the Arthur Capper Senior Center next door. We also urge you to please try to limit double-parking in front of the building on 5th Street, as this is a very high traffic zone and others need to be able to come and go safely. We understand that parking in this neighborhood can be challenging. We encourage families to consider the following strategies:

- **Do not leave children unattended in or around vehicles.**
- Do not leave your parked car running. Lock your car doors and remove any valuables from your vehicle.
- If you must double park momentarily (as long as you will not linger) consider parking along the northside of the building on K Street, where there is much less foot and vehicular traffic.
- Consider parking one block to the north, on Virginia Ave between 4th and 5th Streets

Safety & Child Supervision Outside of School Hours

ToTH prioritizes the health, safety, and well-being of each child in our care. However, ToTH staff cannot be responsible for the supervision or safety of children outside of program hours, including before drop off, after dismissal, or during special events on or off campus.

Parents and caregivers who choose to use the recreation center playground before or after school must adhere to the following guidelines:

- A parent or caregiver must be inside the playground gate actively supervising their child.
- Adults should support children in following the same playground rules that are in place during school hours (posted on playground doors).
- Parents or caregivers should intervene if a child is engaging in an activity that is dangerous, destructive, or disruptive.
- If a class is on the playground, teachers are actively supervising children and cannot engage in conversation.

Parents and caregivers who choose to spend time with their child outside of the ToTH entrance near the planter and benches before or after school must adhere to the following guidelines to reinforce the school time rules and to ensure that all members of our school community continue to be good stewards of our outdoor facilities:

- A parent or caregiver must be actively supervising their child at all times.
- Children may walk, run or sit along the outside of the planter. They may not play inside the planter itself or on the rocks due to safety concerns.
- Mulch, rocks, and dirt stay on the ground. Leaves, flowers, plants, and grass should all be left to grow. Please do not allow your child to remove plants from the public spaces.
- Parents or caregivers should intervene if a child is engaging in an activity that is dangerous, destructive, or disruptive.

- Children should not run or play unattended near the street corners or on busy sidewalks.

Employing ToTH Staff Outside of School

For the protection of these most important relationships between teacher, parent, and child, we ask our parents to not ask ToTH staff to provide personal childcare. Teachers and staff members employed by ToTH are prohibited from providing child care to enrolled children outside of school hours.

Financial Policies

Tuition Policies

- Families are accepted for the entire school year and deposits made to secure a child's space in the program are 100% non-refundable in all situations.
- Tuition will be invoiced in 4 installments through Curacubby and payments may be made through Curacubby via credit card or bank transfer, or by check. All checks must be payable to Toddlers on the Hill. Checks can be mailed to: Toddlers on the Hill, c/o Ila Furman, PO Box 15560, Washington, DC 20003.
- Fees that are not paid in full by 5 days after the deadline will be assessed a late fee of \$35.
- Primary and Full Day Toddler parents will be invoiced monthly via Curacubby for their share of the total amount spent on classroom groceries for snacks and food preparation works (approximately \$25-30/month). Families participating in the DC child care subsidy program will not be invoiced for snack fees.
- Accounts 10 days or repeatedly in arrears may result in immediate termination of this contract. Upon full payment and approval from the Head of School, enrollment may be reinstated if space permits.
- Tuition will be not prorated due to illness, vacation, holidays, inclement weather, or emergency closure of the program due to *force majeure* events, including, but not limited to any fire, hurricane, war, governmental action, act of terrorism, epidemic, pandemic, or any other event beyond the school's control. If such an event occurs, the school's duties and obligations in this contract will be postponed until such time as the school, in its sole discretion, may safely reopen. In the event that the school cannot reopen due to an event under this clause, the school is under no obligation to refund any portion of the tuition paid.

Terminations of Contracts and Refunds

- **Early Termination by the Family**

If a family chooses to terminate their enrollment contract before the end of a session, ToTH requests that families give 30 days' notice prior to the end of the session. All application fees, deposits, and tuition paid are non-refundable and non-transferable. With the exception of families called away for active military duty, ToTH is unable to prorate or refund program tuition payments already made for a given session, regardless of when or if the school is able to fill the space.

- **Early Termination by the School**

The school reserves the right to immediately dismiss a family and cancel the enrollment contract with due cause. In this case, refunds of deposits will not be made, and refunds for tuition already paid for a given session will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Any dispute or claim arising out of the de-enrollment of a child or any other related matter that cannot be resolved between the parent and the Head of School will be elevated to the board. If a resolution still cannot be reached, we will engage in non-binding mediation prior to the commencement of arbitration, litigation, or any other legal procedure. All parties agree to act in good faith to participate in mediation and to identify a mutually acceptable mediator.

The following situations may be considered grounds for dismissal from ToTH:

- Inability or unwillingness to follow published school policies or procedures, including those described below in the “Community Guidelines and Expectations” section of this handbook. Your signatures on your enrollment agreement and the ToTH Policies Acknowledgement and Agreement indicates your willingness to abide by the guidelines and policies set forth in this handbook.
- Inability or unwillingness to treat ToTH's teaching and administrative staff, students, or other ToTH parents and caregivers with trust, respect, and courtesy. ToTH teachers, staff and parents are all expected to strive for high standards of etiquette and behavior.
- Inability or unwillingness to respect a member of the community's privacy. Please help us maintain the mutual trust and respect we all need to keep our community healthy by safeguarding the privacy of children, parents and staff. Passing on confidential, damaging or harmful information is not acceptable.
- It is crucial for the health of the entire community that ToTH and its classrooms are safe spaces for both the children and adults. A child's inability to regulate their behavior after multiple interventions may be grounds for dismissal from the program. If a child has repeated difficulties, the parents will be asked to assist the staff in creating a plan for the child. However, if the behavior continues, the child will have to remain home until the situation is resolved. Biting and hitting are two examples of behaviors that cannot be tolerated at school past a reasonable point (please see the section below about biting).
- Any parent or caregiver who engages in dangerous, disruptive, or destructive behavior on school property will be asked to leave the premises. In addition, such incidents must be reported to OSSE via an Unusual Incident Report form.

Discrimination or harassment of any person in the ToTH community on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, disability, source of income, and place of residence or business is counter to our values and will not be tolerated.

School Communications

Daily Communications

One major difference between ToTH and traditional day care and child care programs is that our teachers focus their attention on being fully present for the children—observing, giving lessons, and continuously preparing the environments for an optimal and individualized learning experience that is developmentally appropriate. Our teachers also take time daily to work on administrative tasks, planning, and team communications. This dedication to the tasks that truly matter in an authentic Montessori environment is what sets us apart and allows us to focus the child's whole development.

As such, we do not provide daily reports on food intake, time spent napping, diaper changes, and toilet use. Teachers will communicate in a timely manner if they observe anything unusual with regards to a child's eating, sleeping, or toileting habits. In our toddler programs, diapering and toilet use is tracked daily per licensing regulations. Our teachers are happy to provide toddler parents with weekly updates, as needed, on how toileting is going and we encourage parents to schedule a meeting with their teachers once your child begins the toilet learning process so that we can support you with the process at home. **For Full Day Toddler parents, please read the section below on Toilet Learning.**

Toddler Classrooms

Weekly classroom wrap-ups describing circle time activities, special celebrations, new works, and other topics are posted on Fridays. Classroom photo albums are also updated weekly. Reading your classroom's weekly update and viewing the photos with your child is a great way to stay informed about your child's experience at school!

Primary Classroom

Weekly classroom activity reports are sent out on Friday evenings by 7 p.m. The weekly report contains a write-up by the teachers describing any special circle time activities, new works or group lessons, class celebrations, or important announcements and reminders. Each student has an individual photo portfolio with captioned pictures updated weekly. Reading through weekly activity reports and looking through the latest photos once a week with your child is a great way to stay informed about your child's experience at school!

Google Group Emails

ToTH maintains a Google Group email address for each classroom to send out important school communications, announcements, and emails. Parents can use the listserv to communicate with each other and send out invitations to birthday parties or other classroom functions.

Social Media

ToTH Montessori maintains active social media accounts. Pictures and videos of students may be featured on our website, in print materials, and on our social media accounts. If you would prefer that your child is only included in background or group photos, and not featured as the subject demonstrating an activity in our print and digital media, you may do so during the enrollment process or by contacting Ila Furman.

Parent Teacher Conferences

Teachers will meet with parents twice each year in the months of November and May to discuss their child's experience, skills, and progress toward developmental milestones. Our teachers are very interested in supporting the home/school partnership and will take time to discuss routines, independence, discipline and other topics. If you find yourself needing additional information about

your child's experience at school, please reach out to your child's teacher to set up a 20-30 minute meeting during the school day.

Observations

Classroom observations help parents and caregivers to see the Montessori philosophy and style of education in action. At certain points in the year we will invite Primary parents and parents of rising toddlers to schedule observations in our Primary (3-6) classroom. Young children in the toddler classrooms generally cannot handle having their own or other children's parents in the classroom. For those communities we will provide video compilations of filmed observations.

Parent Education and Support

ToTH is committed to providing the adults who raise and nurture our students high-quality information, coaching, and proven strategies to support the healthy development of the child. Teachers are available to schedule check-ins upon request. We prefer to delay these "check-ins" until several weeks have passed and your child's teacher has had an opportunity to get to know and observe your child as they adjust to the school environment.

Throughout the school year we will offer virtual and in-person parent education opportunities on a variety of topics ranging from "The Montessori Adult," "Preparing your Home Environment," "Positive Discipline," "Character Development" and more.

Contacting Teachers or Administrative Staff

We believe in honesty, flexibility, kindness, and we have an open-door policy when it comes to discussing the program, a family's needs, or a specific concern. If a question or a concern arises, please reach out to the appropriate person using the communications flow below:

For quick notifications or questions regarding drop-off, pick-up, illness, or emergency:

- Classroom cell phone

For classroom questions or concerns related to your child's experience:

- First: Classroom teaching team (please include all members of the teaching team)
- Second: Head of School

For Montessori-at-home and general parenting or child development questions:

- Family Education Coordinator
- Head of School

For Montessori resources, parent involvement, school operations and policy issues, including Covid-19 and DC Child Care Subsidy Program:

- Head of School

For questions on enrollment, tuition, required forms:

- Director of Admissions and Enrollment (via school email address or office phone number)

For questions related to school facilities, financial policies, financial aid/fundraising, and the ToTH board:

- Head of Administration

In a situation where you do not feel comfortable talking to the Head of School, please reach out to the board by contacting board liaison Anya Landau French at anya@toddlersonthehill.org.

Classroom Policies and Procedures

Phase-In for New Children

Montessori schools have a phase-in system to ensure that children new to school are welcomed in a very peaceful way and first impressions are as positive as possible. The first day on our school calendar is not necessarily the first day of school for everyone. It's important that our returning children are able to reintroduce themselves to school and have the full attention of the guides and teachers for a few days. It's equally important that brand new children have the attention from the guides and teachers that they will need to have good first experiences. For this reason, we phase in students slowly for the first month of school. Specific start dates for brand new ToTH children will be sent out at least a month before school begins. This process requires that new ToTH families be flexible with their schedule for at least the first month of school. Please contact Ila Furman if you have any questions about your child's phase in date. We do our best to accommodate family travel schedules and special requests, but cannot guarantee a preferred phase in date. ****We do not prorate tuition for later phase in dates****

Once your family decides on who will drop off and pick up your child each day, let your lead teacher know so that we can set your child's expectations. It's best, especially in the beginning when consistency is so helpful to a new student, if it's the same caregiver.

Part Day Toddler Phase-In:

- Some part day toddlers may need extra time to adjust to the new school routine. Your child's teacher will contact you if an early pick up is needed and will advise you on building up to the full three hours.
- We ask parents to remain flexible and nearby for the first week so that if the teachers feel that the child needs to head home early they can call the parent or caregiver for an early pick-up.

Primary and Full Day Toddler Phase In:

- For children who are new to a full day school program, it may take some time before they are ready to stay at school for a full day. You will receive guidance from the director of admissions prior to your child's start date about what to expect. After your child begins phase-in, your lead teacher will communicate with you and advise you on setting progressively later pick-up times that meet your child's needs.

- If your child has never napped or rested away from home before, it may take some time for them to adjust to sleeping at school. We strongly recommend that children in our full day programs transition out of sleeping in a crib before they begin napping on a cot at school.

Note: Crying and protesting often happen at drop off during the first several weeks of school. You should still be positive, smile, and show your child you are confident by walking away as if everything is fine (even if you need to shed some tears of your own as you walk away!) We have phased in hundreds of toddlers and preschoolers over the years, and with time, children fall in love with the classroom, their friends, and their teachers. The caregiver's responsibility is to set a positive tone for drop off each and every time, starting on day one. Lingering at the door, not handing your child off, saying multiple goodbyes, etc. will make it harder for the child to separate from you and accept her teachers and friends. Starting school is a big transition for all involved, but it does get easier with time and consistency.

Lunch and Snack: Primary & Full Day Toddler

- Children in our full day programs should bring a **balanced lunch, including proteins, healthy fats, healthy carbohydrates, fruits/veggies** to school each day.
- Full Day toddlers should bring 1 labeled water bottle daily (straw or spout style—no bottles or sippy cups).
- Children in the Primary classroom drink water from small glasses and cups and have free access to water throughout the day (including on the playground and on walks).
- Snacks are provided at school during the morning work cycle and in the afternoons. Snacks are part of the food preparation work in our Montessori classrooms. Parents will be invoiced for the cost of classroom groceries monthly (approx. \$30/month).
- Lunch containers should be **character/cartoon-free. We strongly recommend the [Sugarbooger Good Lunch Bento Box](#) for children in the Full Day Toddler program.**
- In the toddler program we work with the children on independently opening and closing their containers, so please do not send in a container or package that your child cannot open on their own.
- Primary children receive minimal adult assistance at lunch time, so please practice opening and closing containers and snack bags/packages/twist tops with your child at home.
- Please do not send in items in packages/containers that are not-resealable to prevent food waste (i.e. yogurt tubes).
- All items of food must be cut into safe, bite sized pieces to prevent [choking hazards](#).
- Please do not send popcorn for children under the age of four.

Snack: Part Day Toddler

- The Part Day Toddler classroom is a NUT FREE classroom due to a severe walnut allergy.
- Children in our part day program should bring 1 bento-style **snack container** packed with 2-3 finger food snack choices (fruits, veggies, cheese, crackers, deli meat).
- **Snack containers should be character/cartoon-free. We strongly recommend the [Sugarbooger Good Lunch Bento Box](#) for children in the Part Day Toddler programs.**
- Children should bring 1 labeled water bottle (Straw/spout style—please no bottles or sippy cups).
- Please do not send in multiple containers or individually packaged items.
- All items of food must be cut into safe, bite-sized pieces at home to prevent [choking hazards](#).
- Please do not send popcorn for children under the age of four.

- In the toddler classes we work with the children on independently opening and closing their containers, so please do not send in something that they cannot open on their own.

School-wide Food Guidelines

- A well-balanced snack or lunch may contain servings of protein, carbohydrates, healthy fats, and fruits/veggies.
- All children have access to water in the classroom, on the playground, and on walks.
- **Please do not send any of the following food items:**
 - Foods on the class allergy list*;
 - Candy, cookies, fruit snacks and sugary-yogurt;
 - Foods in packaging that your child cannot open independently;
 - Food that your child cannot consume independently;
 - Items that require refrigeration or reheating;
 - Items that are choking hazards;
 - Items in packaging that cannot be resealed.
- Should you have certain dietary preferences for your child (vegetarian, vegan, pescatarian, dairy-free), please inform your lead teacher and the admissions and enrollment director so that we can make a plan for school provided snacks.
- Whole milk is served daily in the full day toddler classroom. If you would prefer your child be offered a milk alternative, please contact your lead teacher.

*We will ensure that any food allergies are communicated to teachers and parents and those foods will not be allowed into the room. Parents should inform the admissions and enrollment director in writing and verbally if their child has any serious or life-threatening allergies.

Clothing & Dress Code

- **Every child should have one complete, seasonally appropriate set of extra clothes and shoes daily. Children who are toilet learning will need 3 additional bottoms and underwear daily.**
- ToTH has a character-free/cartoon-free dress code. Please label all clothing and shoes!
- We encourage simple, easy-to-manipulate items of clothing that children can put on and take off independently. This helps with toileting independence.
- Please do not send children to school in special items of clothing as these items could become dirty or damaged during playtime.
- Tops: T-shirts, sweatshirts, sweaters. **Please no onesies, rompers, or jumpsuits.**
- Bottoms: Loose, elastic waistband leggings, sweatpants, and shorts are best for toileting independence. **Please no buttons, zippers or belts.**
- Dresses, skirts, and tunic tops can interfere with toileting success. Please avoid those items until your child can confidently toilet while wearing them.
- We encourage sturdy, **closed-toed** sneakers or sandals with no shoelaces or buckles. A pair of water shoes can be sent in the summer months when children do water play.
- **For sunny weather:** labeled sun hat. *Please apply sunscreen to your child before drop-off.*
- **For cold weather:** labeled jacket, winter hat, pair of mittens or gloves, pair of mitten clips, warm shoes or waterproof boots.
- **For rainy days:** labeled rain boots, a rainsuit or raincoat, and waterproof pants (we try to play outdoors every day).

Personal Items and Treasures From Home

- We request that no toys, pacifiers, stuffed animals, blankets, lovies, jewelry, electronics, or other non-essential items are brought to school as children.
- Personal items are often a distraction and tend to get lost, misplaced or damaged.
- ToTH is not responsible for personal items that are lost or damaged at school.

Toilet Learning

In a toddler classroom, toilet learning is a major part of the curriculum. As Montessorians we see toilet learning as a natural process that arises out of a child's interest, their desire for independence, and their growing physical and neurological capabilities. The [sensitive](#) period for toilet learning begins at around 18 months old. Toilet learning at ToTH is a positive, easy-going process and we support parents with toilet learning at home so that there is consistency from school to home.

We practice stand-up diaper changes in our toddler classrooms, which allows for the child to help with pushing down/pulling up her pants and removing her own diaper. Staff must wash hands and wear protective gloves when assisting children in the bathroom. Children are invited to have diaper changes at set times during the daily schedule and when a teacher observes that a child has a soiled diaper. Children are invited to sit on the toilet during diaper changes. Children must wash their hands after a diaper change or using the toilet. Once signs of readiness for toilet learning are observed, or the child is approaching 2 years of age, your lead teacher may suggest that you begin the toilet learning process.

- Full Day Toddler Classroom: After a consultation with your lead teachers before phase in about where your child is with toilet learning at home, parents and teachers will agree upon a toileting plan that everyone is comfortable with. Our preference is that toddlers in the full day program do not wear diapers or underwear at school until they are toileting independently with consistency. This allows for children to experience the feeling of wetness and gain greater control over their bodily functions. Our bathrooms have child-sized toilets and children are invited to sit on the toilet every time they have an accident and at set times throughout the day. More often than not, within a few weeks or months children will be using the toilet consistently. When younger children see their friends toileting with ease, they catch on quickly and want that same independence for themselves. Our full day classroom has a full sized washer and dryer and all soiled clothes are laundered at the end of each day and returned to the children's cubbies. Accidents and soiled clothing are handled in a very gentle, matter-of-fact manner. We celebrate successes and clean up messes!

[Read more about Toileting the Montessori Way](#) so you have an understanding of the Montessori approach.

Toilet Independence in Primary

Children entering our Primary classroom must be fully independent with toileting (including wiping) and dressing. If your child is having daily accidents at home, they are not yet ready to phase-in to the Primary classroom and they may benefit from the extra support in a toddler classroom until they are fully ready to transition. It is expected that young children will occasionally have accidents and teachers are available to help and support when necessary. First year children should keep several

extra pairs of pants and underwear at school. Each child should keep a full change of clothes at school, just in case. In the event that a child is having multiple accidents each day, the teacher will meet with parents and solutions will be discussed.

Naps and Rest Time

In accordance with OSSE regulations for full day programs, we offer daily afternoon periods for rest and napping in the Primary and Full Day Toddlers classrooms, Our approach to rest time is informed by scientific research and child-centered practices. Afternoon napping and/or relaxation provides critical opportunities for young children to regain the energy, stamina and the emotional regulation needed for a full day of school. Cognitive neuroscientists and psychologists have also done research that shows that napping amongst preschoolers supports learning and aids in memory consolidation. Our daily schedule includes a rest period designed to meet the developmental needs of the children in each classroom.

Full Day Toddler

Children are invited to rest on cots with a pillow and blanket; the room is darkened and sound machines are turned on; teachers sooth children with gentle patting or back rubs (if needed) until they fall asleep; toddlers typically sleep for between 1.5 to 3 hours.

Primary

1st and 2nd year children are invited to rest or nap on cots with pillows and blankets while Kindergartens work quietly in the classroom. In Primary, the teachers do not soothe children to sleep, so some children may fall asleep while others rest for a while until they are invited to join the older children and continue working. The morning work cycle, group time, lunch, and play can be extremely tiring, and we want the children's minds and bodies to rest so that they can retain the lessons and information they received during the morning and have the necessary energy and composure for a full afternoon at school.

It can be typical that children who drop their nap at home still nap regularly at school due to the different physical and cognitive demands of the school day. Rest time also provides an opportunity for young children to practice being calm, quiet, and patient. It is important in this very busy world with lots of distractions that children have time and space to practice these mindfulness skills.

Parents who would prefer to take their child home prior to rest time and not have them participate in afternoon activities are invited to pick up their child after lunch.

Behavior Policies

At ToTH we strive for peace in all of our environments. Lessons in grace and courtesy lay the foundation for kind and respectful behavior that the child will carry forward into adulthood. But even in our carefully prepared Montessori environment there will be non-peaceful behavior! Each child may differ in their ability to make positive choices and regulate their emotions and actions. We believe in setting firm ground rules for our classrooms, the playground, and neighborhood walks that are rooted in the idea of "freedom within limits." When these ground rules are kindly communicated and

consistently enforced, children will begin to adjust their behaviors and model grace and courtesy for their peers.

Discipline at ToTH is based on Jane Nelsen and Chip DeLorenzo's Positive Discipline approach for the Montessori classroom. This approach shares a mutual respect for both child and adult and focuses on children becoming responsible, respectful and resourceful members of their community. To be a successful, contributing member of their community students must learn necessary social and life skills. Our staff model grace, courtesy, respect, and problem solving skills throughout their daily activities in the classroom.

No child at ToTH will be subjected to harmful treatment, physical punishment, forced separation or "time outs," or threatening or shaming language.

In respect to the Montessori approach and with a positive attitude towards children, ToTH will:

- Make grace and courtesy an active part of the curriculum.
- Create clear expectations and class routines with students.
- Model respectful behavior.
- Model appropriate interactions through metacognitive discourse
- Assist students to work through conflicts proactively and independently.
- Record behavior in a consistent manner on an Incident Report form.

Discipline Procedure

At ToTH we use the following discipline strategies, which are in alignment with the Montessori approach to working with children:

- **Gentle reminders:** We focus on telling children what they should or can do as opposed to focusing our language on the inappropriate behavior. "We sit at tables, we throw balls, we walk in the classroom."
- **Natural consequences:** Sometimes the best lessons need no explanation. A natural consequence of running in the classroom might be falling down and getting hurt, or acting silly with a water glass may result in the glass dropping and breaking.
- **Redirection:** Offering a child a more suitable activity is often all it takes to help them self-regulate with minimal intervention. If a child is restless and disrupting someone's work, we might suggest some gross motor activities or offer a maximum effort helping job.
- **Shadowing:** If an aggressive behavior pattern starts to emerge (hitting, biting) a teacher will shadow the child to observe more closely and intervene before the behavior occurs.

When there is a conflict between two children they are encouraged to talk together and listen in turn. They recognize how their actions have impacted the other person and talk about what they can do to help correct the situation or create a solution that is acceptable to all parties involved.

Steps taken when consequences and redirection have been used but are not effective:

- If a child is unable to calm down, or their actions threaten the safety of others, the child will be asked to move to a safe space in the classroom, such as the library, peace area, or gross motor

area, or a teacher will accompany them in the hallway or outdoors. If the disruption persists or becomes more severe, the child may be sent home for the remainder of the school day.

- When an incident occurs the staff person involved will document the actions involved on an Incident Report form.
- If behavior becomes extreme and/or repetitive, the teacher will schedule a meeting with the parents and, depending on the circumstances, with the Head of School to establish a written plan of action.
- If disruptive behavior continues, parents will be asked to seek outside resources for the child.

Children with Special Needs

It is ToTH's policy to be inclusive with any special needs when we can adequately meet the child's needs. If a) adaptations have been made and b) parents have supported the teacher by following through with recommendations at home, and the teachers find that the child is still not gaining from the environment, the teaching team and Head of School will meet with the parents and help them find a more suitable environment, or suggest the child take a break from school. Under this circumstance whereby the criteria a) and b) have been met, ToTH will refund any money for tuition for the days not used and offer the space to another family. If any specific issue is detected and we feel a specialist is needed, we will recommend a specialist and are available to communicate with any specialists, even if the child is no longer at ToTH.

Biting

Biting often results from frustrated, inadequate communication and/or lack of impulse control—two developmental tasks for young children. Toddlers are in the process of mastering language and often lack the words to fully express their needs, feelings, and thoughts. In the absence of words, toddlers employ their bodies; they push, grab, scratch, and sometimes bite. This is developmentally appropriate.

Because impulse control is still being developed in young children, in conjunction with lack of language skills, physicality can include using teeth to get someone's attention. Often giving words to children who have bitten or teaching them to take turns will help with the behavior. It is not unusual however, for a toddler to bite once or twice.

When a child bites another child at ToTH, our policy is that both sets of parents are informed of the incident without using the other child's name. The parents of the child who has bitten are given some advice by the classroom teaching team that speaks to the developmental tasks discussed above.

Right after the biting incident, the teacher will tell the child who has bitten "I can't let you bite." If developmentally appropriate, the "biter" helps the "hurt child" by giving the "hurt child" an ice pack, after the wound is washed with soap and water. If there is a mark, we will take a picture..

If the biting behavior continues, and this means after three bites, a meeting is then set up between the lead teacher and the parents of the child who is biting to discuss the situation in detail and formulate a written action plan. It is important that everyone, including nannies, relatives, and other caregivers are on-board with the action plan so that the child is receiving clear and consistent messages at home and at school.

At school, teachers will observe behaviors and document all occurrences of biting or attempted biting along with times, locations, children and staff present, location, and circumstances. Teachers will also shadow children to help prevent bites before they occur. In cases where staff or parents feel that the child may have a special need or is exhibiting behavior beyond normal development, the child will be recommended for a developmental evaluation by a trained therapist.

If the above procedures are not successful, the Head of School will discuss other alternatives with the parents. If it is deemed to be in the best interest of the child, the school, and other children, the child may be dismissed from the program for the duration of the biting phase.

Health and Safety Policies

ToTH Montessori is required to follow health directives from the DC Department of Health (DOH) and the DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) on all matters related to the health and safety of the children in our program.

Immunizations and Health Records

Each child must be current on immunizations, as a condition of enrollment. We must receive each child's up-to-date immunization records and completed health and dental forms by the enrollment forms deadline. *Health and dental forms expire annually and must be completed again and resubmitted upon expiration.* This is a requirement of the Office of the State Superintendent for Education. All questions related to the immunization requirement should be discussed with our Admissions and Enrollment Director, Ila Furman.

Illness & Exclusion Policies

ToTH's illness, exclusion, and dismissal policies are designed to minimize the spread of infectious diseases and illnesses and to support a healthy learning environment. Because ToTH is not equipped to care for children who are ill, parents must pick up children promptly if they are contacted for an early pick-up. Please be considerate of your child's classmates and teachers. If you feel that your child may be coming down with an illness, do not bring them to school. If your child is ill, please allow them sufficient time to recover at home before they return to school.

Signs of Illness & Return Criteria

For the protection of all of the children and staff members, your child should be kept AT HOME if they show ANY of the symptoms listed below.

- **Covid-19 symptoms:** If your child is experiencing any of the following symptoms, **they must be tested for Covid-19 using an antigen or PCR test in addition to meeting the standard return criteria. If testing is not recommended, the child will need written documentation of an alternate diagnosis from a licensed healthcare provider:** Fever or chills, Cough, Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, Fatigue, Muscle or body aches, Headache, New loss of taste or smell, Sore throat, Congestion or runny nose, Nausea or vomiting, Diarrhea.
- **Fever:** A temperature of 100.4 degrees or more, especially if accompanied by sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache, irritability, lethargy or confusion.

- To return to school, children must be fever free for one full school day without fever reducing medication.
- **Runny nose or congestion** (continuous runny nose that is not incidental; congestion that causes difficulty breathing, pain, or discomfort)
 - The common cold, while not a serious illness, is still highly contagious in a childcare setting and may cause a child to feel uncomfortable, tired, and irritable. If a sick child is unable to handle their normal classroom routines or daily schedule, we will call for an early pick up. Please allow your child to rest at home until cold symptoms begin to subside before they return to school.
 - To return to school, runny nose/mucous has reduced in frequency/intensity; child has normal energy levels; children over 2 can wear a mask comfortably.
- **Diarrhea** (loose or watery stools that come with greater frequency; stools that contain blood or mucous):
 - To return to school, requires 24 hours without incidence of diarrhea or loose stools plus a doctor's note per licensing regulations.
- **Vomiting** (2 or more instances in 24 hours or one instance accompanied by fever, diarrhea, lethargy):
 - To return to school, requires 24 hours without incidence of vomiting or loose stools plus a doctor's note per licensing regulations.
- **An unexpected rash:**
 - To return to school, a doctor's note documenting treatment and permission to return to school is required.
- **Cough** (persistent, barking, or productive cough):
 - To return to school, cough has reduced in frequency/intensity; child has normal energy levels; children over 2 can wear a mask comfortably.
 - Barking or hacking coughs may indicate more serious illness and will require a doctor's note for return.
- **Sore throat** (especially with fever or swollen glands):
 - To return to school, a doctor's note documenting treatment and permission to return to school is required.
- **Conjunctivitis:** Conjunctivitis is an eye infection commonly referred to as "pink-eye". The eye is generally red, with some irritation and a thick discharge and drainage.
 - To return to school, a doctor's note documenting treatment and permission to return to school is required.
- **Head Lice**
 - Children may return after they have received the treatment recommended by the child's health care professional.
- **Other Contagious Diseases:** Any kind including but not limited to:
 - Ring Worm - small, raised bumps that grow in the form of a circle. Children may return once the treatment recommended by the child's health care professional is started.
 - Strep Throat – the child may return to school no sooner than one full school day after the medication has been administered and a doctor has given clearance for the child to return to school.
 - Chicken Pox – the child may return to school only with a doctor's note stating permission to return to care.
 - Hand, Foot, and Mouth/Coxsackie Virus – Children must remain at home until they are 24 hours fever free and any mouth sores or open blisters have healed.

The following symptoms require a child's exclusion from school (per subsection 151.2 of the OSSE regulations for licensed childcare facilities). **For the symptoms listed below, the child may only return to school with a doctor's note.** This policy is in accordance with subsection 151.4 of the OSSE regulations:

- Diarrhea (loose, watery, or bloody stools);
- Vomiting two (2) or more times in a twenty-four (24) hour period;
- Body rash with any fever;
- Sore throat with any fever or swollen glands;
- Abnormal discoloration of the skin;
- Any fever accompanied by a rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache, irritability, or confusion.

Covid-19 Exclusion, Quarantine/Isolation, and Return Criteria

- Current Covid-19 Quarantine and Isolation guidelines, as well as other policies related to the ongoing response to the Covid-19 pandemic, can be found on our website and will be shared periodically with families via email. ToTH reserves the right to modify its Covid-19 guidelines throughout the school year in response to public health announcements and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control, DC Health, and OSSE.

Illness Notification Policies

If your child becomes ill during school, we will contact you immediately. A child who may be contagious will be temporarily isolated until parents can be reached. If you do not pick up your child within 30 minutes, we will begin to call the Emergency Contacts you have on file. We will keep them as comfortable as possible until the parent arrives. It is important that we have on file the health history and emergency information form with a listing of persons to contact in case of a health emergency and a phone number where a parent or guardian can be reached.

Notice of Exposure and Reporting Disease

If a child or staff member is found to have a communicable disease, all families will be notified by email and the Head of School will notify the health department and OSSE.

Medication

All prescription or non-prescription medication to be administered at school **MUST** be accompanied by a DC [Medical Authorization Form](#). If it is prescription medication, make sure the form is signed by you **and your physician**.

- Prescription medications must be in a new, unopened original container.
- A signed physician's note must accompany the medication with diagnosis, schedule, side effects, time of last dose and whether the child is contagious while on the medication.
- Hand any prescription medication or non-prescription medicine directly to a ToTH administrator. DO NOT give it to your child's teacher or put it in their lunch box, backpack.
- We cannot administer any medication without a Medical Authorization Form..
- The initial dose of medication both prescription/over the counter must first be administered at home.
- A parent signed Medical Authorization Form must accompany non-prescription medication with diagnosis, side effects, whether the child is contagious while on the medication and time of last dose.

- Sunscreen, bug repellent, diaper ointment or any other over the counter ointments, creams, etc. will only be applied if you have authorized ToTH to do so in your enrollment paperwork.

Allergies

- Please notify the school of any food allergies or other allergies your child presently has or develops.
- If your child has an allergy that requires emergency medication (Epi-Pen, inhaler, etc.) please submit a Medication Authorization Form signed by your child's physician as well as an Allergy Action Plan (usually provided by your doctor) with specific instructions for treatment.
- Parents will be notified prior to the beginning of the school year if there are any classroom allergies along with instructions for any food items that may not be allowed in lunches or snacks.

Major Injuries/Accidents and Unusual Incident Reporting

If a child is seriously injured or falls ill while at school and requires immediate medical attention:

1. 911 will be called
2. A staff member will remain with the child and administer first aid
3. The child's parents will be called as soon as it is safe to do so.
4. An administrator will ride in the ambulance with the child if the parent is not available to do so.
5. An injury report and Unusual Incident Report will be completed and sent to OSSE. A copy will be given to the parents.

Minor Injury Treatment and Notification

If a child sustains a minor injury while at school, staff will administer first aid and text a photo of the injury (scrape, bite, bump, fall) and description of the incident to the parents as soon as they are able to do so. Minor injuries will be logged on the classroom injury log. If an injury report is warranted, it will be completed and reviewed by the Head of School and a copy will be provided to the parents at pick up.

Mandatory Reporting of Signs of Neglect of Child Abuse

All ToTH Montessori teachers and staff receive annual training in the area of child abuse and neglect. If any of them suspect neglect or abuse of a child, he or she is required to report suspicions immediately. ToTH also follows the guidelines mandated by the District of Columbia and all teachers and staff have received guides outlining responsibilities and reporting of suspicions of child abuse. Any unusual incident shall be reported to OSSE. If a staff member observes any evidence of child abuse or neglect, such evidence will be reported to OSSE, The Child Protective Services Division of Child and Family Services (202) 671- SAFE), and the DC Metropolitan Police department.

Emergency Response Plan

Building Evacuation

- Take Go-kit including: class roster, parent contact information, class phone, walking rope, and first aid kit.
- Walk up K Street, toward Canal Park, away from the building.
- Call 911.
- If necessary, continue on to our safe haven.
- Safe haven: Van Ness Elementary School, 1150 5th St. SE.

- No children will be released to parents outside or on the way to the safe haven.
- No one may re-enter the building until approved by the fire department or police.

Sheltering in Place

- All exterior doors will remain locked.
- Should it become necessary, children and staff will be guided to closed off interior spaces within the school, such as offices, bathrooms, or large closets.
- No one will be admitted or allowed to leave the premises until the threat is alleviated.

Fire Drills

- ToTH performs monthly fire drills in accordance with licensing regulations.

TOTH MONTESSORI EMERGENCY COLOR CODES

ORANGE: Shelter in place: If dangerous weather conditions or persons have been reported immediately outside or nearby to the school. Each classroom team should gather all children in the classroom, verify classroom doors are secured, and prepare for possible evacuation or lockdown. In the event of dangerous weather, any teaching team out on a walk should seek shelter immediately and contact HoS as soon as possible.

RED: Evacuate: If there is a report of fire, smoke, gas leak, bomb threat in or to the building. Each classroom team should immediately gather all children and backpack/class phone and evacuate to designated location.

BLACK: Lockdown: If there is a report of an armed individual in the building or outside the entrance to the school. Each classroom team should immediately gather all children and backpack/class phone inside their secure locations, remain quiet, and monitor the class phone for further instructions

BLUE: Medical emergency: In the event of a medical emergency, staff should administer necessary first aid, including designating a staff member to call 9-1-1, and notify the HoS.

GREEN: All clear: All teaching teams may return to normal operations.

School communications during emergency

In an emergency, the Head of School (HoS) or designated administrator will notify staff via intercom and classroom cell phones (fire alarm will also sound in case of fire). Cell phones should be on silent in lockdown and staff may be less able to communicate.

Parents will receive text notification from the Head of School after protocols (evacuate, shelter or lockdown) have been activated and the Head of School has been able to instruct and communicate with each teaching team. After initial notification, parents should standby for further communication and/or instructions from the school.

ToTH's full Emergency Response Plan (ERP) is on file with the Office of the State Superintendent of Education and a copy may be provided by the Head of Administration upon request.

